

# Social Questions Bulletin

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*The Methodist Federation for Social Action, an unofficial membership organization, founded in 1907, seeks to deepen within the Church, the sense of social obligation and opportunity to study, from the Christian point of view, social problems and their solutions and to promote social action in the spirit of Jesus. The Federation stands for the complete abolition of war. The Federation rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society and seeks to replace it with social-economic planning to develop a society without class or group discriminations and privileges. In seeking these objectives, the Federation does not commit its members to any specific program, but remains an inspirational and educational agency, proposing social changes by democratic decisions, not by violence.*

## THE FUTURE OF THE M.F.S.A.

By DR. LLOYD BERTHOLF\*

### INTRODUCTION.

Predicting the future is a dangerous occupation, unless one is a prophet or the son of a prophet, or unless one has a crystal ball, or can read palms, or has other occult powers. I have none of these qualities. The only way I know of predicting the future, as Patrick Henry reminded us years ago, is to remember where we've been.

My two predecessors on this program have given an excellent picture of where we are and where we've been during the past years. It is now my duty to extrapolate the curve for a few years into the future.

There is certainly nothing to be gained from a criticism of our past history. Wasn't it Winston Churchill who said in a speech early in World War II that "If we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future."

Let us then be grateful for the opportunities we have had for the attempts we have made to bring increased social consciousness to Methodist people. Let us be grateful even for the criticisms that have come. They serve to warn us to be more careful about our premises and our arguments—to make more sure we are right, perhaps, before we go ahead.

Our future will depend somewhat on the general cultural characteristics of the contemporary age.

President Tate of SMU has characterized the culture of this present age with four words. He says these are materialism, sensualism, propaganda, and schizophrenia.

If that is true, it means, I suppose, that the MFSA of today is also plagued to a certain extent by these four weaknesses. Those of you who have been more deeply involved than I in the organization itself will know best about this.

My only point is that in general an organization cannot fail to be affected by the prevailing atmosphere of the times. What the atmosphere will be in the future, I shall not attempt to predict.

Our attention will need to be directed mainly to the uneducated, the "good," and the privileged.

Christopher Morley once remarked that "The enemies of the Future are always the very nicest people." It is becoming especially true of the Church, it seems to me. The statement of Justice Jackson has often been quoted, namely that "It is one of the paradoxes of our times that modern society needs to fear little except men, and what is more, it needs to fear only educated men."

It is not the ignorant masses that we fear today; it is rather the highly educated but unscrupulous leaders of the close-knit political parties—the Goebbels, the Krushchevs, the Maos-tungs, the Tojos, the Francos, the Nassers, etc.

The ability of a small group with political power to control the minds and emotions of masses of people today either through the withholding of certain vitamins or the administration of certain drugs, together, perhaps, with the skillful use

of propaganda, is one of the most frightening aspects of our modern civilization. A great battle is shaping up for the emotions of men. The church must get into the thick of this battle.

Before I discuss ways of doing this, let me point out also that it is often the "good" people that we have to fear. Too often piety alone is considered the sum-total of religion, even as the Pharisees thought in Jesus' day. Conversion has occurred, but not conversion of the whole man. Consequently it is often sadly true that "good" church members stand in the way of slum clearance, for example, or integration of races in schools, or fair employment practices. And because they are the "good" people, the voice of their opposition to these social reforms holds back the reforms much more completely than the voice of "bad" people would. The Church must serve as the conscience of the State, to be sure, but who is going to serve as the conscience of the Church?

And then, too, it is the privileged people that the world must often fear rather than the great mass of under-privileged. These are the conservatives, the seekers after the status quo—not always, of course, but often. They think they stand to lose if change occurs. And so they use their power to resist, until tension mounts to the breaking point, and then everybody loses.

Somebody needs to whittle away gradually at privilege, so that the difference between over-privilege and under-privilege does not become too great—does not get to the breaking point.

### IV. The Role of the M.F.S.A.

I have already hinted, I think you can see, at what seems to me to be the continuing role of the Federation in our church and our society.

It must, for one thing, take an increasing interest in educa-

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tion—in college education and seminary education particularly. For every Goebbels there must be a Walter Rauschenbusch for every Stalin a John R. Mott. For every atomic physicist devoting his talents to fission for destruction, there must be one working on atoms for peace. For every psychological expert devoting himself to clever propaganda for the benefit of some state seeking world domination, there must be an equally expert psychologist willing to bet his skill and his life on the psychology of love.

We cannot hope to "educate" the world into peace, in the ordinary meaning of education. There is not time. The powder is already in the keg, and the fuse lighted. We must both educate the mind and stir the emotion of a relatively few young men and women until they are willing to throw themselves with utter abandon into the process of "reconciliation through love," and thus put out the fuse. The promise of God to Abraham regarding Sodom still stands, I believe: "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." No one has ever yet fully demonstrated what redeeming power there is for a modern wicked city or wicked state in the lives of ten persons superbly trained in mind, and completely dedicated to the Gospel of Love.

The Federation must in the second place continue to be a social conscience for the Church. Becoming a Christian is in one sense often a very simple act of repenting and turning around. But that is only the beginning. Becoming a Christian in every aspect of one's being is the most complicated, the most revolutionary process that can come to a man. It simply cannot happen all at once. It is a long stairway that the would-be Christian climbs throughout life, sometimes at a snail's pace, sometimes leaping up several steps at a time.

It is the function of the MFSA to keep reminding us of more steps ahead—steps that we are prone to overlook.

Just how to do this most effectively in the future is a matter of real concern. It cannot be done if the Federation separates itself too far from the main body of the Church, no matter how right it may be. After all, the method of love must be practiced in regard to church members just as well as in regard to Communists, for example.

Perhaps one way to keep the organization close to the body of the Church is to provide for a constant turn-over of leadership—every year a certain percentage going out of office and new ones coming in. Thus the organization does not become "typed" by the personality of a small group of people, or vice-versa.

In the third place, the future of the MFSA rests in its ability to work out a constructive program for dealing with the relation between the relatively highly privileged and the relative under-privileged.

Just to mention a few of these tensions shows how complex the problem is:

- (a) The wealthy vs the poor and the effect of creeping inflation
- (b) The state or country or individual richly endowed with natural resources (such as water and coal and oil and fissionable ores) vs one not so endowed.
- (c) The race or class or creed group having rich education and cultural and employment opportunities vs the groups which these opportunities are denied.
- (d) The peoples enjoying political freedoms vs those denied the freedoms.
- (e) The nations in which there is freedom to worship and assemble and speak and write and travel vs the peoples not having these freedoms.

This is complicated business for the Church, I realize. And we must not assume that a little piety or quoting of the Bible or opening a meeting with prayer will solve all the problems. But these things will help. And if in addition, we can have well trained economists, foreign ministers, labor trouble-shooters, atomic scientists, etc., who are not only well qualified intellectually but who also have real Christian character and a thorough grounding in the philosophy of Christian Social Action, we shall eventually solve these problems through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### V. Conclusions:

The MFSA has had a glorious past, and I predict also a brilliant future. But it must not become congealed or rigid. It must not adopt a creed that cannot be changed with the times. To worship a word is dangerous, for the meaning of words changes. Russian "communism" is a far cry from the "communism" envisioned by Marx and Engels. The "capitalism" of the American "Robber Barons" is a far different capitalism from the "People's Capitalism" in the U. S. today.

Let us therefore constantly re-think our creeds, re-state our objectives, and re-orient our activities, all within the framework of our fundamental purpose to "deepen within the church the sense of social obligation."

If we do this, I predict the MFSA will flourish and will continue to perform a great service as it goes into its second half century.

## THE FEDERATION AND CONGRESS\*

By HARRY F. WARD

There is another reason beside the fact that the Federation was organized in this city which makes it appropriate that its Fiftieth Anniversary should be celebrated here. That reason is our case against the Congress which began with our suit for a restraining order against the Eastland Committee. I wish to discuss the relation of our case to the whole struggle to maintain the First Amendment to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights of which that Amendment is the corner stone.

Our case is unique because the government instead of being the prosecutor is the defendant and also because of its comprehensiveness. It covers the whole of the First Amendment. The Congressional Committees' attack upon us, which was begun by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in 1948, was an interference of the state in a religious controversy contrary to the principle of separation of church and state expressed in the first sentence of the First Amendment. It violated the second sentence by seeking to deprive us of the right to freely exercise the prophetic function of moral judgment upon the whole life of mankind which is an essential element of an ethical religion. It has abridged our right to free speech, press and assembly. In refusing consideration of our petition for a special and neutral committee to hear our charges against the committees who attacked us the recent session of Congress nullified for us the right "to petition government for a redress of grievances." Thus the wheel of cold war repression rolls over the whole First Amendment, from the first clause to the last.

In addition, pressing down the measure of its unconstitu-

tionality to running over, this attack attempts to deprive us of our organizational life, liberty and property by taking away from us the good name upon which these depend, in violation of the guarantee of the Fifth Amendment that this cannot be done without due process of law, which in popular language means a fair trial. The conditions for this are spelled out in the Sixth Amendment: "a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury . . . to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witness against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense." These are the rights of the worst criminal. Yet we had none of them. The first we knew of the findings against us was when we read them in the press after they were printed in a Handbook addressed to the public.

It is true that a Committee Hearing is not a court of law (Incidentally we had no Hearing, and there evidently was no investigation. The most superficial attempt would have discovered that our organization named as a "religious front" formed by the Communist Party, was organized in 1907 whereas the Communist Party was organized in 1919.) It is also true that the findings of the inquisitorial Congressional Committee impose penalties grievous to those upon whom they fall. Consequently these Committees have no moral right, and by inference no constitutional right, to deny those facing these penalties the rights guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment.

Another new constitutional issue in our case, beside the free exercise of religion, is the right of Congress to go into the pub-



ing business. This does not mean its right to print its records and make them available to the public. It applies only to printed matter designed for, and addressed to the public. This involves the question of the extension of the constitutional right of immunity for "any speech or debate in either house" to such printed matter and to the staff members who prepare it.

In our instance an associated issue appears. Have Congressional Committees any constitutional authority to make and publish lists of "communist fronts" and "subversive organizations and publications"? In all their proceedings the inquisitorial committees are subject to the charge of violating our constitutional principle of separation of the powers of the three branches of government by usurping some of the functions of the judiciary. Our case adds to this the charge of usurping the powers of the executive branch. Congress itself assigned to the Internal Security Control Board and the Attorney General the task of determining and penalizing communist front subversive organizations.

The two of the panel of three Federal judges who decided our case against us completely ignored this fact. They overlooked the duty of the judiciary to refrain from infringing upon the powers of the legislative branch. They were silent about their duty to protect the nation from legislative infringement upon the powers of either the judiciary or the executive branches. The dissenting opinion naturally pressed hard on this point.

Another vital point about Congressional publication of lists of communist front and subversive organizations is raised by our case. We proved by incontrovertible facts that the charge could not be true. The majority opinion declared that even when material addressed by Congress to the public was false and dangerous the courts had no power to grant redress. That could be done only by Congress. This is tantamount to giving a judge charged with unconstitutional behaviour the power to decide whether or not he was right. For our case is again unique because the injustice done us was not by Congressional Committees alone but by both Houses of Congress acting in unison. 1000 copies of the Handbook which made the original charge were printed for distribution across the land by Joint Resolution of Senate and House. Consequently they were accepted, printed and reprinted as the voice of Congress.

When, by an unfortunate conjunction of circumstances we took the opportunity to appeal to the Supreme Court and the only thing left was to do what the majority decision told us and go back to Congress, what did we get? Our petition for a neutral special committee to hear our charges was buried in standing committee pigeonholes.

Thus our case throws more light on the injury done to our political morality by the repression of the cold war period. To the persecution and extra-legal prosecution of the inquisitorial committees—their decisions on the basis of one sided testimony; their prejudicing of press and public by quoting from executive sessions in advance of public hearings; their continued use of unproved and proven perjured witnesses—is added the printing of absolute falsehoods without any hearing or any effort to find out the truth. Then, faced with the injustice done by their vote, both Senate and House are unwilling to hear the proof that requires reconsideration of their act and prevention of its recurrence. This is more than an individual case. We were acting in the interest also of many other organizations—labor, peace, civil rights—in the same position as we are. As long as this injustice can continue, there can be no moral health in our political life. The silence and inaction which perpetuate this, added to the vote which magnified it, is reducing Congress to the moral level of those who produce and pay false witnesses. This shocking situation is the result of several factors. In its beginning, ignorance played a large part. Certainly most of the voters did not know what was in the hundred-page Handbook of Americans when they voted to spread it across the nation. The increase of Congressional business by the growing number of investigations forbids such first hand knowledge. The Committee which recommended that the House approve the Joint Resolution were informed of what they were sanctioning. So they added a proviso that sole responsibility for contents of the document remained with the Senate. As though any formula could be strong enough to remove the stain of their approval. A second factor which enables the perpetuation of injustice

by Congress is the net-work of rules and procedures which lessens action by the body as a whole and magnifies the power of committees and their chairmen. As is well known, the conjunction of seniority with representation of areas where a majority of the citizens is not permitted to vote throws power into the hands of some who being beneficiaries of unconstitutional behaviour have no desire to lessen or prevent the injustice arising from anti-democratic actions of committees.

A kindred factor working to this end is the fear of legislators with a "liberal" voting record of being smeared as the result of doing or saying anything against any action of an inquisitorial committee. Last July our representatives found it disheartening to hear from "liberal" legislators or their secretaries how careful they had to be to avoid any action which would be politically suicidal back home. This fear will lessen of course if the courts, aided by organizations which have been unjustly injured, and by all who believe that the First Amendment means what it says, will continue to educate the public concerning the unconstitutional nature of the Red hunt and its moral depravity. Then, before too long, a sufficient majority of the voters will see that the real threat to our democratic development comes from those who are destroying the First Amendment under the guise of protecting our freedom, and will end both the terrorism and the fears it has generated.

Our responsibility for hastening this event is heavy, especially in the field of religion. Our purpose in starting our case against Congress went far beyond finding relief from the injustice done us. It was also to help remove the peril with which that wrong threatens the whole of organized religion and the entire life of the nation. This is the only way through which the injury from which we are suffering can bring forth the fruits of righteousness, freedom and peace.

Our first obligation is to our own Church. The record of our contribution to it, plus the nature of the attack upon us, makes it clear that an important element in the life of our Church is involved. That is also true for the National Council of Churches and our contribution to it. Those who have read the Religious Freedom Committee Digest of the testimony before the Un-American Committee in '53 concerning communist infiltration into religion can have no doubt that what the Committee is attacking is the prophetic function of religion. What they were seeking to discredit and silence is its voice of moral judgment concerning the state of the nation and the world, and concerning the way of life by which mankind should travel into the future. Consequently it is tragic that both our Church and the National Council have let this attack go unanswered. For without prophetic utterances what does the church become but another institution living off society instead of changing it?

In our own domain it is also tragic that our Church has remained officially silent concerning the state's unconstitutional interference in a religious controversy in violation of the principle of separation of church and state. This interference was achieved by collaboration between the Un-American Committee and an organized unofficial group within the Church. The joint objective was to destroy our influence, because both forces object to our interpretation of the gospel of Jesus. The printed utterances of the opposing group within the Church have at times violated the disciplinary standard for conduct regarding such differences.

Consequently part of our contribution to ending the terrorism of the inquisitorial Congressional Committees should be asking

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the authorities of our Church to make it clear that no group within our Church has the right to seek aid from the state to make its views prevail, and that no group will be permitted to express itself in ways that violate our standards for Methodist behaviour.

Our further contribution to the restoration of all the First Amendment freedoms should be to ask the Committee on Democratic Freedoms of the National Council of Churches to hear our case against Congress and to decide its significance for the future of religious freedom in this land.

It is obviously our manifest duty to seek the consideration of our petition and its charges as unfinished business in the next session of Congress, by contacts with Senators and Representatives. This is a way to make concrete our demand for the abolition of the Un-American Committee which now must include the Eastland Committee, and to enlist us in the national campaign for this end now being mobilized. Our case provides additional proof that the threat to the nation from the behaviour of these Committees cannot be met by reform of their procedures. Their evil doings come from the nature of their mandates. The fruit of this tree is so poisonous that the axe must be laid to its roots. There is no safety except in abolition. Whatever weight and power we have should go into the campaign for this end. Each member should do something to get it started in his community. It will be a long and hard job. But it can be done.

\* Address at 50th Anniversary MFSA meeting, Washington, July 18, 1957.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Enough facts have now broken through the sound and fury produced in our press by the Soviet satellite to enable a judgment of its meaning for our foreign policy.

In the Soviet Union the dominant emphasis is upon its contribution to the age long search for more knowledge about the planet on which we live. Krushchev hailed its launching as proof that the "the emancipated and conscious labor of the people of the new socialist society will make man's most daring dreams come true."

To the desire to explore outer space—the area beyond the upper atmosphere—this venture has contributed conquest of 70 per cent of the way to the moon. The "escape velocity" needed to reach that point—that is the speed required to escape the gravitational pull of the earth—is 25,000 miles per hour. The satellites' speed is 18,000 miles per hour.

The factual knowledge it is gathering through its instruments concerns the shape and crust of the earth and the behaviour of the magnetic field that surrounds it. The Moscow radio announces that their scientists have received information from the satellite's short wave transmitter concerning changes in the density of the electric pole that will enable measurements of the magnetic field and of the so-called electric "ring" currents set up by disturbances in the sun. This knowledge will help weather forecasting and the improving of international radio communications.

The prevailing judgment in the scientific world is that the satellite has no direct military value. But it has some direct implications for military program planning. The data it gathers will help in planning the trajectory of the long range Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM). Vastly more significant is the fact that the satellite is proof that the Soviet Union has the final weapon we have been seeking—the long range guided missile which completes the process of turning warfare into mass murder and suicide that we began when we dropped the first nuclear bomb. Rockets with power to lift and drive the satellite around the world at a speed never before achieved could carry a guided missile from anywhere in the Soviet Union to anywhere in the United States. This makes bombing planes as unnecessary as they made the battleships. A French scientist holds that this rocket speed leaves a fighter plane unable to intercept them.

There is enough fact here to complete the disintegration of the foundations of our position of strength diplomacy which began when we lost the monopoly of the bomb. In the long interview in Moscow with Krushchev accorded to Reston, top Washington man of the New York Times, he said:

"We now have all the rockets we need: Long-range rockets, intermediate-range rockets, and close-range rockets. Of course these are not the limits of what can be achieved, for engineering is not mark-

ing time, but these means fully insure our defense."

What value does this leave our far flung bases around the Soviet Union? Or Dulles' latest scheme of a ring of allies with nuclear weapons around the "Soviet-Sino perimeter"? or the statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of our General Norstad, NATO commander in Europe: "I think we have that capability. I am speaking now of destroying everything that is of military significance in Russia at the present time. That belongs with the Pentagon judgment that Hitler would conquer Russia in six weeks.

Our Department of Defense reaction to the satellite is more emphasis on its new study of missiles and of getting higher in space than the Russians. Dulles says that the satellite has aroused the whole country to the importance of forging ahead in the field of rockets and missiles. Nixon says it calls upon the nation to put war preparation expenditure above tax cuts. Krushchev, however, in his Reston interview, rejected the arms race: "But we do not want such competition. We want peaceful relations, not the stockpiling of means of destruction." He recognized that the U. S. would soon have the long-range missiles and said he wanted discussion between equals:

"We want to reach an agreement with the United States but only on a footing of equality, without dictation or discrimination. Proposals which place the Soviet Union in a position of inequality cannot be accepted by the Soviet government."

He also recognized that the guided missile has put the question of disarmament on another level:

"We are ready even now to conclude a reasonable agreement on the entire problem of disarmament, to considerably reduce arm forces or even not to have an army at all, leaving only a police force to protect honest people from robbers and thieves who unfortunately do exist. But we do not want wars."

This is not merely a challenge from an opponent. This is where the practical logic of the guided missile comes out. To dismiss it as Soviet propaganda, or a Communist trap, is to invite destruction.

History is repeating itself. To the first Geneva disarmament conference at Geneva in the twenties, the infant Soviet Union came with a proposal for 100 per cent disarmament. Its representatives were dismissed with scorn as impractical idealists. Behind their proposal was the historic demand of all schools of socialism for the ending of war, reinforced by the need of the young socialist society for peace. Behind its repetition today, there is the need of the socialist nations to go forward with their great tasks of reconstruction and construction; behind that is the need of all nations to escape the doom threatened by nuclear weapons.

Yet the voice of that two-fold need will be rejected by our spokesmen and those of the capitalist nations we lead. Concerning discussion of this matter with the Soviet Union, Dulles has just said correctly: "We agree in words but our minds do not meet." The first paragraph of his July 22 broadcast shows why.

"I shall speak about disarmament. We do not of course use that word in any literal sense. No one is thinking of disarming the United States or the Soviet Union or any other nation. What we are seeking is action, in the field of armaments, which will reduce the danger of armed attack."

Behind this difference in objective is a basic fact. To the Soviet Union total disarmament would be an economic benefit. To the United States it would be an economic hazard.

The roots of the demand for total disarmament run down through the teaching of Jesus to the voices of the great Hebrew prophets who foresaw the day when their God would teach the nations to learn war no more and the weapons of death would be refashioned into means to help bring the more abundant life to all. Is this demand to be rejected now because it is raised by the "godless" Communists? Or will the followers of Jesus see in this fact what Paul discovered in Lystra and again in Athens, that the "living God" has not left Himself without witness in all nations?

To all seekers for world peace, everywhere, the challenge of the power in the satellite is to raise their sights from the demand for the immediate banning of all weapons of mass destruction to the longer goal of total disarmament as an essential condition of a warless world. "No more war" is the slogan needed now. To us, who for some years have had that on our banner, the challenge is to seek in every annual conference of our church to get a resolution to that end, asking the cooperation of our Peace Board and the Board of Social and Economic Relations.

H.F.W.